

Putrajaya (PJ) Multilateral Forum

CG's Remarks

18 April 2012

Your Excellencies, Ministers, Secretaries, Chiefs of Defense, Chiefs of Army, distinguished panel members, fellow leaders, and friends.

I am honored to be here at Putrajaya 2012 representing the United States, and I am equally impressed to see so many nations, leaders, and friends, from across the Pacific and the globe participating in this vital multinational defense forum.

I would like to begin by thanking our host – the Malaysian Ministry of Defence – for all of its hard work in organizing this opportunity for us to gather, think,

converse, and exchange ideas. This is not my first visit to Malaysia, but it is my first visit as the commander of U.S. Army Pacific, and I deeply appreciate Malaysia's graciousness and hospitality.

For decades, the Asia-Pacific region has served as an inspiration to the world with its example of the tremendous economic and personal prosperity - possible only when peace prevails and our peoples can focus on working hard and building our societies.

As underwriters of the security that makes such unprecedented growth possible, each of us here today, representing our respective Nations, plays a critical role in extending that stability further into the

21st century. I, like many of our distinguished speakers over the last few days, am a firm believer that the dialogue that occurs here, and in other multilateral fora across the region, is absolutely essential to ensuring that differences of opinion are expressed with words... rather than weapons.

Before discussing the particulars of Army Transformation, I'd like to begin with some of my observations traveling throughout the region.

Since taking command of U.S. Army Pacific last March, I've had the great fortune of visiting 15 countries – often more than once – and getting to know many of you in this room. Much of our discussion centers on three overarching topics, which

I'd like to briefly address for the benefit of the entire audience.

The first is the renewed focus of the United States on the Asia-Pacific region. This 'refocus' is not a new initiative, rather, it is a return to a rich foreign policy tradition of partnership that goes back for decades. I would like to point out that in reality, we never left.

This region remains indispensable to both the global and U.S. economies. Five of the United States' oldest treaty allies are in Asia and the Pacific. U.S. policy, therefore, aims to expand existing alliances and partnerships for peace as widely as possible in the region.

Multilateralism is crucial to this effort. America's strategic 'refocus' is certainly not only military; on the

contrary, it is a whole of government approach to extending the tranquility that has allowed this region to flourish for so long. We have all seen the steady flow of high-level engagements throughout the region by my country's highest civilian leaders during the last several years, starting with President Obama and including Defense Secretary Panetta, Secretary of State Clinton, and all of our top economic, trade and education officials as well.

And like all of the world's best Armed Forces, the U.S. military is following the lead of our senior national leaders.

General Odierno – our recently appointed Army Chief of Staff – selected the Pacific Region as the site

for his first official visit. I am proud to announce that he is committed to attending the next Pacific Armies Military Management Seminar, which U.S. Army Pacific will co-host with our great partners in Australia, this July. Our senior leaders' actions underscore the vast importance that the United States places on partnership with all countries in the region. All countries in the region.

Please allow me to be direct. There may be a mistaken impression that the United States is enhancing its engagement in Asia and the Pacific to confront or contain a growing China.

Again, please, Let me be as clear as possible:
The United States seeks to develop a positive,

cooperative, and comprehensive relationship with China. We understand that China will play an important part in addressing critical global challenges.

We – as others - welcome that role.

Over the long-term, China's emergence as a regional power, has the potential to affect economic and security dynamics throughout the region and the world. While the growth of China's military power must be accompanied by greater clarity and transparency of its strategic intentions, our two countries have a strong stake in peace and stability in East Asia and a mutual interest in building a cooperative bilateral relationship.

To my second point - after almost every discussion of American policy with any counterpart, dialogue usually shifts to reports of reductions in the U.S. military's end-strength and budget as we transform ourselves for a new era. Again, allow me to be open with all of you: as we transition from combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military as a whole – and with it, our Army – will experience reductions in both personnel and budget, both of which grew substantially to support our operations over the past decade.

However, our senior leaders are unanimous in the opinion that these reductions will not come at the expense of force structure and priority in Asia and the Pacific; and they certainly will not affect the quality or

quantity of partnership programs with each of our partner nations.

The third topic of discussion is always, of course, transformation – and that's why we are here today.

The modern operating environment – consisting of land, sea, air, space, cyberspace, and most importantly, the human domain – is extremely fluid and unpredictable, and the role of technology is important.

The more our Armies leverage technology - including advanced optics, remote and unmanned sensors, electronic and cyber systems, and joint

capabilities - the greater the impact of land force operations in achieving national objectives.

I was therefore happy to see several U.S. defense companies participating in the DSA Expo yesterday. As a veteran of multiple combat tours, I firmly believe the United States produces the most reliable equipment in the world. And the more equipment we have in common with our partners, the greater our interoperability.

But technology is not a panacea. The true secret to successful transformation lies in the human domain: in the people who lead, direct, and employ the software and hardware of modern militaries. Being human, the elements of transformation are

therefore common to all of us. The U.S. Army is currently applying a critical view toward how we recruit, employ, and retain the very best people – whether Soldier, Noncommissioned Officer, Officer, or Army Civilian.

As a young officer I, like many of you, focused on the tactics, techniques, and procedures of our profession. Although traditional combat techniques remain vital to our collective defense, a decade of contingency operations demonstrates that a host of other competencies are required to achieve lasting success.

Joint synchronization is a must in the modern operating environment, with Armies cooperating

seamlessly with other services to maximize the strengths of each, while minimizing individual vulnerabilities. We know that successful endeavors today are almost always coalition efforts – regardless of the mission’s purpose or circumstances. And, success is no longer predicated solely on military prowess. Coordination with other governmental agencies is vital to ensure a unified effort in attaining national goals; and often, coordination between multinational commands and with various ministries and agencies of partner governments, is likewise necessary to capitalize on each nation’s unique experiences and subject matter expertise.

These fundamental truths are the basis for the United States’ desire to expand military exercises in

order to ensure multinational interoperability with partner nations; to develop relationships between forces, military leaders, and governments; and to rehearse responses to foreseeable contingencies.

Nowhere is this more critical than in the realm of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

After a year in command of U.S. Army Pacific, the only thing I can say with confidence is this: we will face a natural disaster somewhere in the Asia-Pacific. It is a fact of where we live. Every one of our countries is vulnerable to the powerful forces of Nature in our region, as headlines attest all too often.

These disasters – much like the tragic earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the flooding in Thailand, the recent earthquake off of Western Sumatra, and landslides in the Western Pacific – demand quick and united responses to limit damage, loss of life, and derailing of the economic activity so vital to continued development. This kind of united response is only possible through persistent engagement and exercise.

I would also like to echo the ASEAN Secretary General Dr. Surin's call yesterday for greater multilateral cooperation on military medicine issues. I commend Malaysia for the continued contributions of its military medical team in Afghanistan. Likewise, my command is co-hosting our annual multinational Asia-Pacific Military Medicine Conference in Bangkok at the end of this month with the Royal Thai Army.

Together, we can strengthen the health element of the human domain.

The next step in our U.S. Army transformation is a program called ‘Army 2020.’ At Army and unit level, harnessing the potential of each Soldier in our commands -- the essential “human domain” -- is of the highest importance. We have found that a decentralized mission command characterizes the best modern military operations. Important decisions are being made less and less in command posts by senior officers, and increasingly by junior officers, NCOs, and Soldiers on the ground.

Our junior leaders are now required to train, plan, and execute operations independently due to the increasing size of our operating areas and the speed at which we operate. Technology and network-centric systems exponentially dictate the increasing speed at which we must operate and make decisions.

Our transformational emphasis on empowering junior officers therefore mandates improved education and training to ensure that the decisions these young leaders make are moral, ethical, and effective.

In an effort to improve the professional development opportunities available to our NCOs and junior officers, I have reached out to many of you in the hope of allowing them to attend your schools and

to learn from your very best. And I look forward to offering your leaders a similar opportunity to train in U.S. Army institutions so we can increase the combined quality of our unit-level NCOs and officers.

The continued prosperity of every nation in the region – and the stability and security that makes it possible – is our ultimate strategic goal. In order to achieve this vision, mutual trust, borne from interoperability and from our young officers rubbing shoulders in our schools and in exercises, is paramount.

As a young Lieutenant and Captain in our Hawaii-based 25th Infantry Division, I trained with, and in, many countries in the region - including Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore – just to name a few! Those early experiences with other nations shaped my views and attitudes toward our partners and allies and prepared me well for my later service in the region as a General Officer in various assignments.

More than anything, I'd like to replicate that same kind of positive experience for our future leaders and with an even wider group of countries. I am convinced that with greater understanding and deeper relationships comes a decreased potential for miscommunication, miscue and conflict.

During our conversations at this forum, I encourage all of us to consider the possibilities opened by transformation in the human domain of our Armies. The relationships fostered through multinational exchanges, exercises, and schooling are truly the cornerstone to all of our Armies' evolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today, and I look forward to good dialogue with you either during the Q&A period of this panel or on the margins of this excellent forum. I wish each of you safe travels, good health, peace and prosperity.